

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### **EKBA, Inc.**

#### **Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions**

#### **Ekba Sets Sail For Excellence**

##### **Client Profile:**

EKBA, Inc., located in Ashdown, Arkansas, is a boat accessory manufacturer. The start-up company employs less than 20 people.

##### **Situation:**

EKBA' Owner Ed Lewis designed and built prototypes to manufacture modular accessories for boats. His first step was to patent the concepts; then he planned to setup, in incubator manufacturing, those accessories. Mr. Lewis requested leads on funding, manufacturing of castings, manufacturing techniques, and assistance in setting up the manufacturing facility from the Arkansas Manufacturing Extension Network (the Network), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

##### **Solution:**

The Network has a strong commitment to companies like EKBA, which need help developing manufacturing technologies, evaluating various product lines, and designing plant layouts to implement those technologies.

The Network provided Mr. Lewis with leads on various sources of manufacturing technologies, business plan development, and financing. The Network's ties to the Arkansas Department of Economic Development (ADED) and Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development Authority (SWPLA) proved especially helpful in obtaining new business development funding for EKBA. The Network coordinated meetings to introduce EKBA to metal working specialists. EKBA also received assistance evaluating various manufacturing technologies, various methods of employee compensation, alternative flows of materials, and potential plant layouts.

EKBA purchased and installed equipment based on the Network's recommendations, and has used it to develop several different product lines. EKBA has received its first orders and gone to production; it is now testing and developing additional products to meet market demand.

##### **Results:**

Raised funds to start company and make initial capital investments.

Purchased and installed manufacturing equipment.

Developed several different product lines.

Received initial customer orders and started production.

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## Success Stories from the Field

**Testimonial:**

"The Arkansas Manufacturing Extension Network has become an important part of the EKBA team. The Network has contributed many ideas and has been a source of locating many resources. The Network has been a major source of growth in the development of the production process and in the development of the facility layout. Additional work still needs to be done in refining the production process and in insuring that costs are in line with expectations. We at EKBA expect the Network to continue to be a team player in the development and growth of this company."

Ed Lewis, President